IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please enter the replacement sheet of drawings (Figure 5) that is attached to this Amendment.

REMARKS

Revisions to the Application

In reply to the objection to Figure 5 (see page 2 of the Office Action), the present Amendment forwards a replacement sheet having a correction in Figure 5. The correction is that the output node is now identified by reference number 525. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the drawing objection has been overcome.

In reply to the objection to the disclosure (see page 2 of the Office Action), the present Amendment corrects the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13 so as to more accurately describe what is shown in Figure 4, and corrects reference numbers in a paragraph bridging pages 14 and 15. Accordingly, the objection to the disclosure should be withdrawn.

In reply to the rejection under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112 (see page 3 of the Office Action), the present Amendment revises claims 4, 5, 12, 13, 15, and 19 to improve their definiteness. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner is thanked for his courtesy in offering a suggestion for improving claims 5 and 13; this suggestion has been followed.

The Rejection for Anticipation

The Office Action rejects all of the independent claims (and most of the dependent claims) for anticipation by patent 6,392,494 to Takeyabu et al. This reference will hereafter be called simply "Takeyabu." The rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons discussed below.

Independent claim 1 recites first and second current mirrors, along with first and second switching transistors. Claim 1 provides that the first switching transistor is "turned on during assertion of a first control signal ..." and has a gate that "receives the first control signal." Similarly, claim 1 provides that the second switching transistor is "turned on during assertion of a second control signal ..." and has a gate that "receives the second control signal." The Office Action draws attention to Takeyabu's Figure 16, and characterizes various transistors shown in this Figure as a first and second current mirrors of claim 1. The Office Action also characterizes Takeyabu's transistors NT14 and PT14 as being the first and second switching transistors. As for the first and second control signals recited in claim 1, the Office Action takes the position that the Q output of Takeyabu's flip-flop 126 provides both of them, turning transistor NT14 on when the Q output is high and turning transistors PT14 on when the Q output is low. It is respectfully submitted, though, that an ordinarily skilled person who had read the present application would not consider this to be a reasonable interpretation of the claim language.

An ordinarily skilled person would appreciate that first and second control signals for respective switching transistors can have four possible states – low plus low, high plus low, high plus low, and high plus high. The Q output of Takeyabu's flip-flop 126 has only two possible states, though. The arrangement defined by claim 1 is able to permit current through an output node to vary from a positive value, to zero, to a negative value, and to achieve a fast switching speed. This is neither disclosed nor suggested by the reference.

Independent claims 8 and 16 also recite first and second switching transistors and first and second control signals. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that they are patentable over the reference for the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

The remaining claims depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, so they are patentable along with their independent claims.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Wood
Registration No. 28,134
Customer No. 23995
(202) 326-0222
(202) 408-0924 (facsimile)
(202) 408-5297 (facsimile)

AW:rw